Biksi-Yetfa language

Yetfa and **Biksi** (Biaksi; Inisine[3]) are dialects of a language spoken in Jetfa District, Papua, Indonesia, and across the border in Papua New Guinea. It is a trade language spoken in West Papua up to the PNG border.

According to Hammarström (2008), it is being passed on to children and is not in immediate danger.

Biksi-Yetfa	
Biksi	
Native to	Indonesia and Papua New Guinea
Region	Jetfa District in Pegunungan Bintang Regency
Ethnicity	Yetfa, Biksi
Native speakers	1,000 (1996)[1]
Language family	Pauwasi ▪ Yetfa – South Pauwasi ▪ **Biksi-Yetfa**
Dialects	Yetfa Biksi
Writing system	Latin script
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	`yet`
Glottolog	`yetf1238 (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/yetf1238)`[2]

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External relationships

Yetfa is not close to other languages. Ross (2005), following Laycock & Z'Graggen (1975), places Biksi in its own branch of the Sepik family, but there is little data to base a classification on. The similarities noted by Laycock are sporadic and may simply be loans; Ross based his classification on pronouns, but they are dissimilar enough for the connection to be uncertain. Usher found it to be a Southern Pauwasi language. Foley (2018) classifies it as a language isolate.[3]

Foley (2018b: 295-296) notes that first person pronoun and third-person singular masculine pronoun in Yetfa match pronouns found in Sepik languages, with some resemblances such as *nim* 'louse' with proto-Sepik *nim 'louse', and *wal* 'ear' with proto-Sepik *wan. However, Foley (2018b) considers the evidence linking Yetfa to the Sepik family to be insufficient, thus classifying Yetfa as a language isolate until further evidence can be found.[4]

Pronouns

Pronouns from Ross (2005):

I	*nyo*	**we**	*nana*
thou	*pwo*	**you**	*so*
s/he	*do*	**they**	*dwa*

Pronouns from Kim (2005), as quoted in Foley (2018):[3]

Yetfa independent pronouns

	sg	pl
1	na	no
2	po	so-na-m
3	do	do-na-ma

Basic vocabulary

Basic vocabulary of Yetfa from Kim (2006), quoted in Foley (2018):[5][3]

Yetfa basic vocabulary

gloss	Yetfa
‘bird’	dau
‘blood’	dueal
‘bone’	fan
‘breast’	nom
‘ear’	wal
‘eat’	ŋa
‘egg’	nela
‘eye’	i
‘fire’	yao
‘give’	ni-
‘go’	la-
‘ground’	permai
‘hair’	framai
‘hear’	wi-
‘I’	na(wo)
‘leg’	yop
‘louse’	nim
‘man’	nam
‘moon’	dirmanel
‘name’	met
‘one’	kəsa
‘road, path’	mla
‘see’	am-
‘sky’	aklai
‘stone’	tekop
‘sun’	imenel
‘tongue’	mor
‘tooth’	doa
‘tree’	yo
‘two’	daisil
‘water’	ket
‘we’	no(wo)
‘woman’	romo
‘you (sg)’	po(wo)
‘you (pl)’	sonam

Sentences

There is very little sentence data for Yetfa. Some of the few documented Yetfa sentences are:[3]

(1)

do mete ti-yo
3SG yesterday come-TNS

'She came yesterday'

(2)

do muni ɲ(a)-awa-te ni-yo
3SG money 1SG-father-DAT? give-TNS

'She gave money to my father.'

The Yetfa tense suffix *-(y)o* is also present in Tofanma.[3]

References

1. Biksi-Yetfa (https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/yet/) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Yetfa" (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/yetf1238). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
3. Foley, William A. (2018). "The languages of Northwest New Guinea". In Palmer, Bill (ed.). *The Languages and Linguistics of the New Guinea Area: A Comprehensive Guide*. The World of Linguistics. **4**. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton. pp. 433–568. ISBN 978-3-11-028642-7.
4. Foley, William A. (2018). "The Languages of the Sepik-Ramu Basin and Environs". In Palmer, Bill (ed.). *The Languages and Linguistics of the New Guinea Area: A Comprehensive Guide*. The World of Linguistics. **4**. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton. pp. 197–432. ISBN 978-3-11-028642-7.
5. Kim, So Hyun. 2006. *Survey Report on the Yetfa Language of Papua, Indonesia*. Unpublished report. Jayapura: SIL Indonesia.

External links

- Yetfa word list at TransNewGuinea.org (http://transnewguinea.org/family/yetfa)

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